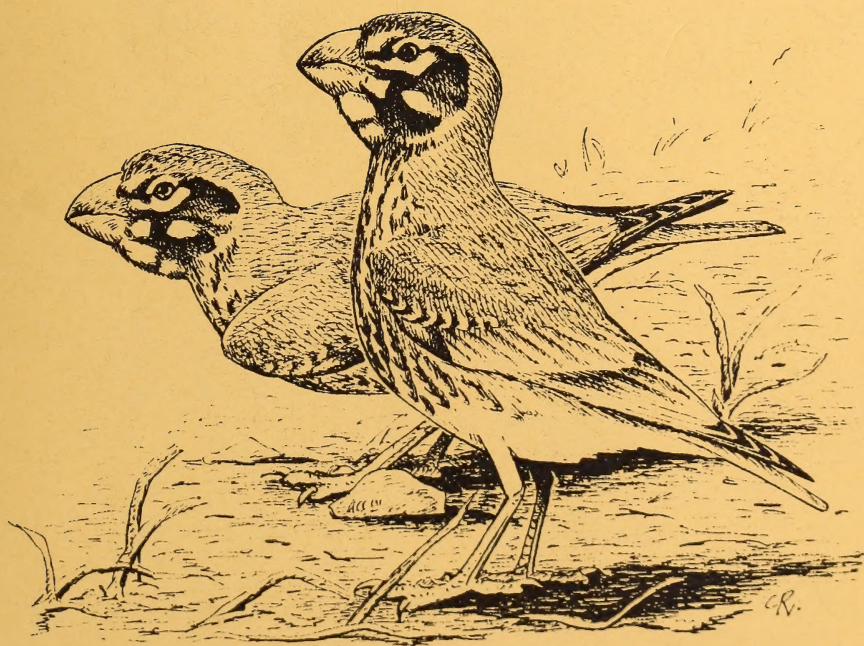


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MIDDLE EAST



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OSME BULLETIN 23

EDITORS: Mark Boyd and David Fisher

All records in this bulletin are subject to acceptance by the relevant records committee of the country concerned.

Please note that details of expeditions, availability of expedition reports, news of members, other societies and ornithological events are welcomed and may be printed in the bulletin free of charge subject to the discretion of the Bulletin Editors. Contributions for the next bulletin should be sent to the Editors by 15 February 1990

Illustrations

We are grateful to the following artists for the illustrations used in this bulletin:

S. M. Andrews: Darters (p. 5), Upcher's Warbler (p. 11), Spoonbill (p. 14), Sparrowhawk (p. 21), Indian Silverbill (p. 43).

Craig Robson: Thick-billed Larks (cover).

THE MIGRATION OF WADERS AND OTHER WATERBIRDS THROUGH INLAND WETLANDS IN CENTRAL TURKEY, SPRING 1988

Marc van Roomen & Hans Schekkerman

During the last few decades, much research has been carried out on the migration of waders and other waterbirds in the East-Atlantic Flyway. More recently the eastern part of the Mediterranean area has also received attention in this respect, mainly because it has become clear that some populations of waders wintering in western Africa migrate to their Siberian breeding grounds via the eastern Mediterranean, as well as those birds wintering in northeastern Africa.

So far, systematic work on wader populations in this area has been largely restricted to coastal areas, both in winter and, more recently, in spring (South Turkey Project 1989, Marteiijn & Meininger in prep). However, the species involved in this region are often not restricted to coastal wetlands, but can be found in a wide variety of wetland habitats. Inland wetlands may be particularly important for these species because large-scale tidal areas are scarce. So far, systematic data on the use of inland wetlands in the eastern Mediterranean during migration have been lacking.

Between 1 April and 25 May 1988, an expedition organised by the Dutch Working Group for International Wader and Waterfowl Research (WIWO) studied the spring migration of waders and other waterbirds in several wetland areas on the central plateau of Turkey. At the same time, another WIWO group conducted a similar study at Eber Gölü, situated further west. The main purposes of the Central Anatolia Project were assessing numbers and migration patterns of waders and other waterbirds on several steppe lakes on the Anatolian plateau, collecting information on the origin of birds using these wetlands, and carrying out observations on habitat preferences, feeding behaviour and feeding conditions.

Five wetland areas (Tuzla Gölü, Külü Gölü, Seyfe Gölü, Yay Gölü/Sultansazlığı and Tuz Gölü; figure 1) varying in size, salinity and vegetation were visited regularly. A base camp was established at Tuzla Gölü. Between 3 April and 27 May, 15 counts were carried out here, and 3-5 counts each in the other areas. The most numerous wader species were Ruff Philomachus pugnax (sum of maximum numbers in individual areas: 9600) Little Stint Calidris minuta (4900), Avocet Recurvirostra avocetta (1384), Kentish Plover Charadrius alexandrinus (700), Dunlin Calidris alpina (670), Black-winged Stilt Himantopus himantopus (570) and Wood Sandpiper Tringa glareola (400). Other interesting waders observed were Red-necked Phalarope Phalaropus lobatus (85), Broad-billed Sandpiper Limicola falcinellus (41), Greater Sand Plover Charadrius leschenaultii (25; breeding confirmed) and Terek Sandpiper Xenus cinereus (1). Figure 2 shows the migration patterns of some species, based on regular counts at Tuzla Gölü and Külü Gölü.

Compared with coastal areas, wader numbers were not very high for most species. However, many more wetland areas of various size are to be found in the interior of Turkey, many of which have some suitable wader habitat. It is very difficult to obtain a reasonable estimation of the total numbers of waders using these wetlands, but these could be high. Attempts to catch waders at Tuzla Gölü were made mainly in the freshwater marsh. In total, 118 waders (13 species) were ringed and measured.

To gain some insight into prey types available to waterbirds, macrofauna was sampled in different habitats. In contrast to tidal areas, almost no benthic fauna was found. The main food available for waders seemed to be free-living organisms such as crustaceans, insects, larvae of amphibians, and, in some lakes, small fish. Foraging waders sometimes displayed very wide habitat spectrums. For instance, Ruffs were found swimming on the lake in pursuit of crustaceans, wading along the water's edge and in densely vegetated marshes, walking on flooded meadows and even in large flocks on arable land, where they may have been taking seeds, and were observed following tractors in the manner of Black-headed Gulls Larus ridibundus. Other species showed clearer habitat preferences; Wood Sandpipers were usually found in freshwater marshes with dense vegetation of sedges and rushes, and Spotted Redshanks Tringa erythropus seemed confined to lakes holding populations of small fish.

The main threat to the wetlands of the Anatolian plateau seems to be the construction of large-scale drainage schemes. With these schemes, the flooding of low-lying areas with fresh water during spring is greatly reduced. This may well affect the suitability of these wetlands for waterbirds, since significantly larger numbers of birds were often found at sites where the influence of fresh water was apparent.

Apart from the work on waders, notes were made of the occurrence of all other birds species in the areas visited. Ringing of passerine migrants was carried out on a small scale. Interesting observations were 319 White-headed Ducks Oxyura leucocephala and 2 Demoiselle Cranes Anthropoides virgo at Külü Gölü, a few Great Bustards Otis tarda at Tuzla and Tuz Gölü, and Citrine Wagtails Motacilla citreola at several locations including a maximum of 18 at Tuzla Gölü, where strong indications of breeding were found.

The members of the Central Anatolia Project 1988 were Drs. Miriam J. Langeveld, Mark W. J. van Roomen, Gurdagar Sarigul, Hans Schekkerman, Levent Turan and Drs. Jeroen C. J. van Wetten. The project was financed by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Beyerinck Popping Fonds, Conseil International de la Chasses et de la Conservation du Gibier, Bachienestichting, OSME and Dr. L. Hoffmann. The work was carried out in cooperation with the Hacettepe University at Ankara, in the persons of Dr. I. Kiziroglu and L. Turan, and the Turkish Society for the Protection of Wildlife (DHKD), in the persons of N. Yazgan and G. Sarigul.

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Mr Ludwigstraat 1, 1901 PS Castricum, the Netherlands

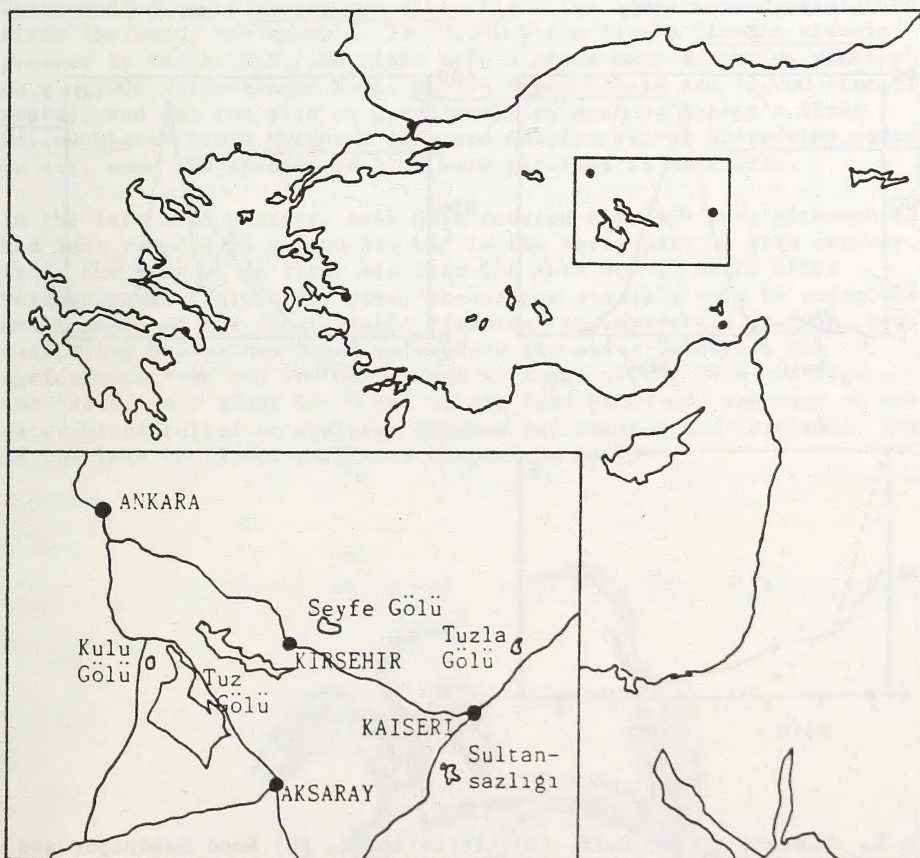


Figure 1. Locations of wetlands visited by the WIWO Central Anatolia Project 1988.

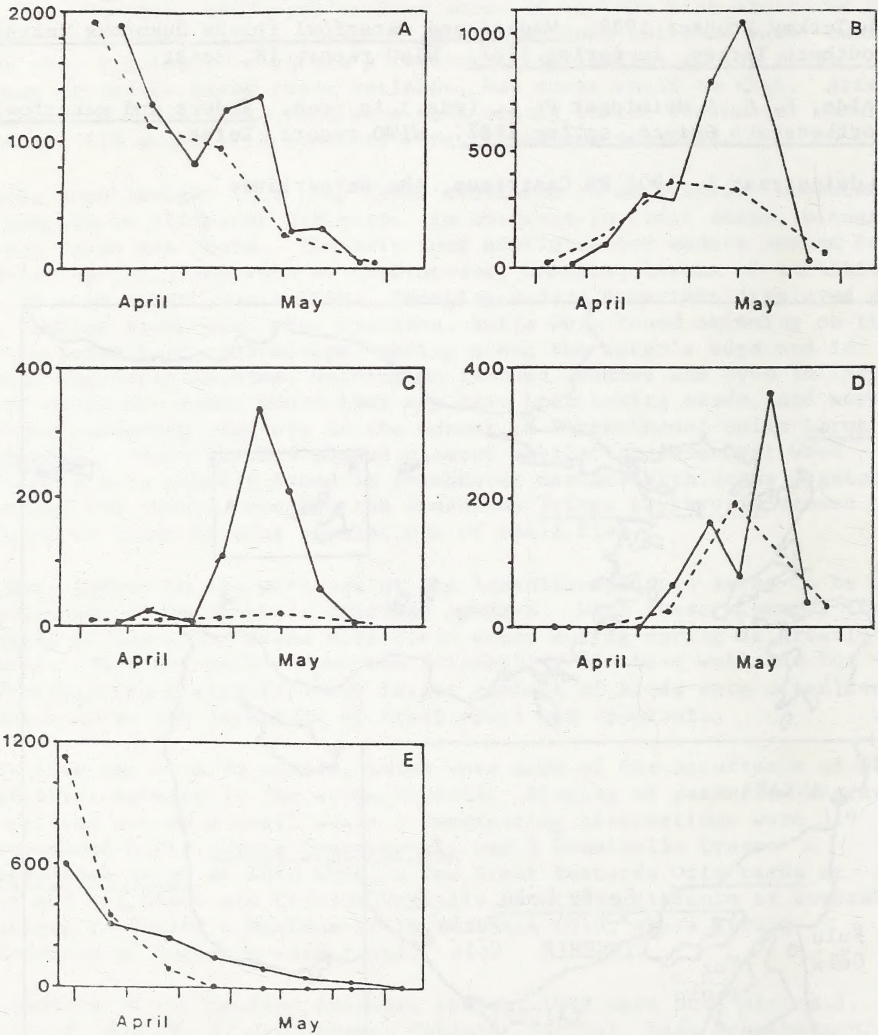


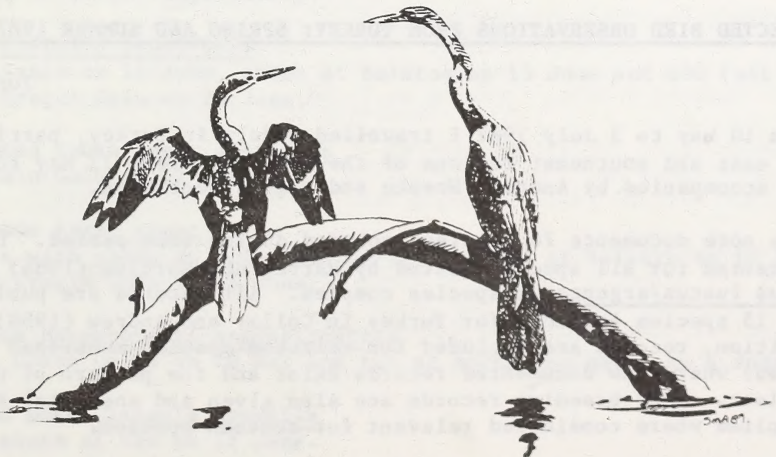
Figure 2. Numbers of (A) Ruff, (B) Little Stint, (C) Wood Sandpiper and (D) White-winged Black Tern at Tuzla Gölü (solid) and Kulu Gölü (broken), and (E) numbers of Wigeon (broken) and Garganey (solid) at Tuzla Gölü during April and May 1988.

AMIK GÖLÜ, SOUTHEAST TURKEY: A PLEA FOR NATIONAL PARK STATUS

Dr Hans Kumerloeve

Before its final drainage in 1975, Amik Gölü, situated near Turkey's Syrian border, was perhaps most famous as Turkey's sole breeding site for the Darter Anhinga melanogaster, but it was also important for a great variety of other breeding and migrating birds. Breeding species included seven herons, both Dalmatian Pelecanus crispus and White Pelicans P. onocrotalus, Marbled Duck Marmaronetta angustirostris, Pygmy Cormorant Phalacrocorax pygmeus, Moorhen Gallinula chloropus, Purple Gallinule Porphyrio porphyrio, White-breasted Kingfisher Halcyon smyrnensis and White-tailed Eagle Haliaeetus albicilla. The large number of migrant birds included, for example, 25-30,000 White Storks Ciconia ciconia present in March 1965. The lake held a great many wintering wildfowl (e.g. 1,000 White-headed Ducks Oxyura leucocephala and 12,000 Pintail Anas acuta), and was the site of great rarities such as Turkey's first Yellow-billed Stork Mycteria ibis and Caspian Plover Charadrius asiaticus. In all, some 190 species of bird were recorded at Amik Gölü.

In the late 19th century, Amik Gölü covered some 350 km², although this had been reduced to around 310 km² in the early part of this century. In 1953, the year of my first visit to the lake and 20 years after Meinertzhagen visited the area, access was possible only by using the small boats of the local Arabic fisherman and hunters. By 1956, however, cattle and horses had begun to replace the water buffaloes for agricultural use and the mechanized drainage of the lake had begun. In the 1960s, only about 40-50 km² of the lake remained, and many of the water birds relied on drainage ditches for shelter and survival. Drainage of the lake continued until its completion in 1975.



I witnessed this destruction during nine visits between 1953 and 1974, and made personal pleas to officials in Ankara and Antakya, urgently warning of the great mistake being made. I have been supported by a growing number of Turks, who are interested not only in the creation of nature reserves but also the national regulation of hunting.

Following around 25 years' destruction of Amik Gölü in favour of modern agriculture, it is apparent that as well as an ecological disaster, it has also been an economic failure. Hasan Karaca, a Turkish pharmacist and naturalist who lives near the former Amik Gölü, has shown (Karaca 1987, 1988) that the draining of the lake has adversely affected the fertility of the surrounding plains and so has not benefitted the landless peasant farmers it was intended to help.

In his critical articles, Karaca included a proposal to reflood a sufficient part of the dried lake bed to create a new Turkish National Park for Nature Conservation and Wildlife Protection, i.e. Lake Amik Bird Paradise, which would again become important for hundreds of thousands of migrants as well as many breeding birds. I must plead emphatically for the establishment of this reserve and suggest that it should become a model for the whole Middle East.

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SELECTED BIRD OBSERVATIONS FROM TURKEY: SPRING AND SUMMER 1987

Jonathan Eames

From 10 May to 3 July 1987 I travelled widely in Turkey, particularly in the east and southeast regions of the country. From 23 May to 19 June I was accompanied by Andreas Noeske and Mogens Henriksen.

This note documents 76 species recorded during this period. Data are presented for all species listed by Harrap and Martins (1986) except the Larus fuscus/argentatus species complex. All records are published for the 15 species included for Turkey in Collar and Andrew (1988). In addition, records are included for selected species mentioned in Beaman (1986) where few documented records exist and the pattern of occurrence is unclear. Many breeding records are also given and anecdotal evidence supplied where considered relevant for certain species.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Two pairs near Ardahan on 21 June and six at Cildir Golu on 22 June.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

Three at Eregli Golu on 28 June.

Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*

Ten at Bulanik on 10-12 June and 300 at Eregli Golu on 28 June.

White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

Six at the Goksu Delta on 19-20 May, 60 at Bendimahi on 9 June and 32 at Eregli Golu on 28 June.

Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*

Six to nine at Kizilirmak Delta on 26 June. Presumed nesting by three pairs but not proven. German egg-collectors had taken six eggs in 1987 (Durmus Pehlivan verbally).

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

One at the Kizilirmak Delta on 26 June.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Breeding confirmed at the following localities; Silifke on 19 May, Tasucu on 21 May, Ercek Golu on 9 June, Ardahan on 21 June.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Three at Kizilcahaman on 11 May, one at Cildir Golu on 22 June, four at the Kizilirmak Delta on 26 June.

Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita*

Six breeding pairs at Birecik, had produced at least nine young, many of which appeared close to fledging. Three nests were located on the wooden platforms provided and three others on the cliff-face. Two large cages held 11 and 19 birds respectively.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Four at Bulanik on 11 June, three at Balatos on 13 June and 600 (all imms.) at Eregli Golu on 28 June.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Forty at Kulu Golu on 12 May.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Three pairs with young at Kulu Golu on 12 May, two at Bulanik on 10 June and six at Eregli Golu on 28 June.

Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

Six at the Goksu Delta on 20 May and two at north Van marsh on 4 June.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

One 10 km south of Van on 22 June.

Velvet Scoter Melanitta fusca
Sixteen at Cildir Golu on 22 June.

Goldeneye Bucephala clangula
One at north Van marsh on 8 June and one at Bendimahi on 9 June.

White-headed Duck Oxyura leucocephala
100 + at Kulu Golu on 13 May and four at Van on 8 June.

White-tailed Eagle Haliaeetus albicilla
One long-dead found at Kulu Golu on 12 May.

Lammergeier Gypaetus barbatus
One sub-adult at Kizilcahaman on 11 May and two adults displaying at Demirkazik on 24 May.

Black Vulture Aegyptus monachus
Two at Kizilcahaman on 11 May.

Sparrowhawk Accipiter nisus
One at Kizilcahaman on 11 May and one at Catak on 6 June.

Long-legged Buzzard Buteo rufinus
One at Demirkazik on 25 May, a pair with four young at Birecik on 29 May, one at Halfeti on 31 May, six east of Van on 5 June (including one dark morph), four at Catak on 6 June, two at Baskale on 7 June, one at Malazgirt on 12 June and one long-dead beneath power cables in same area.

Bonelli's Eagle Hieraaetus fasciatus
Two at Halfeti on 31 May.

Lesser Kestrel Falco naumanni
A colony containing 46 birds at Adabag near Eregli Golu on 28 June.

Eleonora's Falcon Falco eleonorae
One at Tasucu on 21 and 23 May, three at Aydincik on 23 May, two at Birecik on 28 May, one east of Van on 3 June, two near Adabag on 28 June, one at Topkapi Palace, Istanbul on 3 July.

Peregrine Falco peregrinus brookei
Two pairs found nesting on sea-cliffs at Adresan on 16 May. A local fisherman said he could obtain a nestling for a high price!

Caucasian Black Grouse Tetrao mlokosiewiczii
Twelve (11 males, 1 female) at Sivri Kaya on 17 June. Three males were seen displaying. This is the largest count at this site so far. The Turkish for this species is Karatowk and not Keklik which is used for Caspian Snowcock and Chukar.

Caspian Snowcock Tetraogallus caspius

Five at Demirkazik on 25 May and one at Sivrikaya on 7 June.

Purple Gallinule Porphyrio porphyrio

Three at the Goksu Delta on 19 May.

Common Crane Grus grus

Four pairs nesting along the River Murat at Bulanik on 10 June, 220 roosting on the River Murat, Bulanik on 11 June, two pairs nesting near Ardahan on 21 June, three at Kizilirmak Delta on 26 June and two Eregli Golu on 28 June. German egg-collectors had recently taken eggs of this species at the Kizilirmak Delta (Durmus Pehlivan verbally).

Demoiselle Crane Anthropoides virgo

Two on the River Murat at Bulanik on 10 June, two on the River Murat at Balatos on 10-13 June. The pair at Balatos were incubating.

Great Bustard Otis tarda

Two males at Balatos on 13 June. Local men were quite confident that it was 'not forbidden' to hunt this species.

Black-winged Pratincole Glareola nordmanni

A pair holding territory was located on the River Murat at Bulanik on 10 June. Despite extensive searching no nest was found. One bird performed a broken-wing distraction display, and this bird constantly returned to the same small area of riverbank.

Greater Sand Plover Charadrius leschenaultii

Nine at Kulu Golu on 13 May, two at Ercek Golu on 5 June, 150 + at Eregli Golu on 28 June. The flock at Eregli Golu represents the largest single count ever recorded in Turkey.

Red-wattled Lapwing Hoplopterus indicus

Ten at Cizre on 2 June. The largest count to date at the species' only known locality in Turkey.

Broad-billed Sandpiper Limicola falcinellus

Fourteen at the Goksu Delta on 20 May.

Great Snipe Gallinago media

One at the Goksu Delta on 21 May.

Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus

One at Kulu Golu on 13 May.

Marsh Sandpiper Tringa stagnatilis

300 at Eregli Golu on 28 June. A significant count of an otherwise common and widespread species.

Terek Sandpiper Xenus cinereus

One at Ercek Golu on 5 June.

Audouin's Gull Larus audouinii

One at Tasucu on 19-21 May and four near Anamur on 23 May.

White-winged Black Tern Chlidonias leucopterus

100 at Kulu Golu on 13 May, five at Birecik on 28 May, three at Cizre on 2 June, three at Van marsh on 3 June, one at Ercek Golu on 5 June and 30 at Bendimahi on 9 June.

Pin-tailed Sandgrouse Pterocles alchata

200 at Birecik on 30 May and ten at Cizre on 2 June.

Scops Owl Otus scops

A pair was located at its day-time roost at Halfeti on 31 May. Striated Scops Owl is also recorded from this locality.

Striated Scops Owl Otus brucei

A pair watched nightly at their tree-hole nest site in the park at Birecik, on 28-31 May. Despite the loud music, video, neon lights and crowds of people, the birds seemed little disturbed.

Eagle Owl Bubo bubo

One at Birecik on 29 May.

Long-eared Owl Asio otus

Two (one adult and one fledged juv.) at Birecik on 28 June.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater Merops superciliosus

Ten on the River Euphrates at Birecik on 28 May and a colony of 15 pairs west of Birecik on 30 May.

Great Spotted Woodpecker Dendrocopos major

Common at Kizilcahaman on 11 May.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker Dendrocopos minor

One at Akseki cemetery on 18 May.

Desert Lark Ammomanes deserti

Four at Birecik on 30 May.

Sand Martin Riparia riparia

300 pairs, south of Birecik on 30 May, 50 at Bendimahi on 9 June, 500 pairs in two adjacent colonies at Bulanik on 10 June and four at Cildir Golu on 22 June.

Citrine Wagtail Motacilla citreola

One male at Bendimahi on 9 June and three (two males, one female) at Ardahan on 21 June.

Radde's Accentor *Prunella ocularis*

Two at Demircazik on 25 May.

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*

Four at Demirkazik on 25 May and six at Sivri Kaya on 17 June.

Red-tailed Wheatear *Oenanthe xanthopyrma*

Eight, including a pair feeding two fledged young at Yesilce on 27 May.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Two at Van marsh on 3 June, common at Bulanik marsh on 11 June and two at the Kizilirmak Delta on 26 June.

Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon*

Very common at south Van marsh on 3-4 June, four at Ercek Golu on 5 June and three at Bendimahi on 9 June.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

One at Kulu Golu on 13 May.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

One at Tasucu on 23 May, four at Bulanik on 11 June, two at Balatos on 13 June and two at Sivri Kaya on 17 and 18 June.

Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida*

One at Tasucu on 23 May, eight at Yesilce on 27 May and six at Halfeti on 31 May.



Garden Warbler Sylvia borin

One at Tasucu on 23 May.

Green Warbler Phylloscopus nitidus

Three at Sivri Kaya on 18 June, three at Ikizdere on 18 June and 25+ at Sumela on 25 June.

Mountain Chiffchaff Phylloscopus sindianus

Six plus at Sivri Kaya on 16 June.

Chiffchaff Phylloscopus collybita brevirostris

Ten at Kizilcahaman on 11 May.

Spotted Flycatcher Muscicapa striata

One at the Goksu Delta on 19 and 20 May and one at Birecik on 30 May.

Semi-collared Flycatcher Ficedula semitorquata

One female at Ispir on 15 June and two males at Ispir on 16 June.

Great Rock Nuthatch Sitta tephronota

30+ at Yesilce on 27 May and six at Halfeti on 31 May.

Rock Nuthatch Sitta neumayer

One at Akseki on 17 May, six at Halfeti on 31 May and four at Van on 4 June.

Wallcreeper Tichodroma muraria

One at Demirkazik on 25 May.

Rose-coloured Starling Sturnus roseus

35 at Kulu Golu on 13 May, four at Demirkazik on 24 May, 30 at Baskale on 7 June, one at Bendimahi on 8 June, 30 at Ispir on 15 June and one at Bulanik on 20 June.

Tree Sparrow Passer montanus

Five at Demirkazik on 25 May.

Pale Rock Sparrow Petronia brachydactyla

Two at Yesilce on 27 May and two at Halfeti on 31 May.

Yellow-throated Sparrow Petronia xanthocollis

15+ at Birecik on 28 May and 15 at Halfeti on 31 May.

Bullfinch Phyrrhula phyrrula

One at Ikizdere on 18 June and one at Sumela on 25 June.

Cinereous Bunting Emberiza cineracea

30 at Yesilce on 27 May, one at Birecik on 29 May and three at Halfeti on 31 May.

Appendix

The place-names in this note are listed under the regional divisions of Turkey, as used in the Turkish Bird Report. The spelling of place-names are anglicised and accents are omitted.

BLACK SEA COASTLANDS

Ikisdere, Ispir, Istanbul, Kizilirmak Delta, Sivri Kaya, Sumela.

SOUTHERN COASTLANDS

Adresan, Akseki, Anamur, Aydincik, Demirkazik, Goksu Delta, Silifke, Tasucu.

CENTRAL PLATEAU

Adabag, Eregli Golu, Kizilcahaman (including Sogusku National Park), Kulu Golu.

SOUTH-EAST

Baskale, Birecik, Catak, Cizre, Halfeti.

EAST

Ardahan, Balatos, Bendimahi, Bulanik, Cildir Golu, Ercek Golu, Patnos, Van.

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44 Mount Pleasant, Norwich, Norfolk, Great Britain.

BREEDING BIRDS ON SOME RED SEA ISLANDS OFF NORTH YEMEN

Mike Evans

Introduction

Almost nothing is known of the ornithology of the Red Sea islands off the North Yemen coast, since they lie in a politically sensitive area and access to them is highly restricted. However, British cartographic survey parties visited the islands off Al Luhayyah in 1977 and 1979; N. R. Phillips accompanied one of the visits in the latter year and published some bird observations resulting from this (Phillips 1979).

For the benefit of future investigators, this paper summarises the breeding bird data in Phillips (1979) and that obtained from correspondence with two of the British surveyors, Frank Preston and Ivan Adair (Preston 1979a, 1979b; IA in litt. 2 May 1987), together with information about the islands themselves.

Background

The area visited by the survey team is shown in Figure 1; it stretches from Buhays in the north to Kamaran in the south and as far as Kitamah. Most but not all of the islands in this area were visited; descriptions of 16 islands are provided in appendix 1, taken from Preston (1979a & b). Most islands are low, flat and sandy, rising only a few metres above sea level, but several are formed from upraised coral and are higher. Vegetation is sparse on all islands, with thin grass and low scrubby bushes (*Suaeda*?); there is very little mangrove vegetation and that only about 30 cm high. Most of the islands have a fringing coral reef, and usually also have a sandy beach allowing access, at least at high tide.

Breeding birds

i) Spoonbill



On 1 July 1979 a colony of not more than six Spoonbill Platalea leucorodia nests was found on the east coast of southern Humar; the nests were on raised lumps of dead coral just above the beach, and contained both eggs (one C/2 noted) and newly hatched chicks (Preston 1979a; IA in litt. 18 August 1987). This is the first breeding record from North Yemen; the subspecies involved is presumably archeri.

ii) Terns

Nesting terns Sterna were noted on the low, sandy islands of Juwa, At Talawin, Qusur and Hataban, and possibly also on Al Badi' (Preston 1979a, 1979b; FP in litt. 2 May 1987), despite Juwa and Hataban being infested with mice. Breeding terns were not found on the rocky, upraised coral islands of Tikfash and 'Ukban; the islands of Zurbat, Kitamah and possibly Zuraymah are infested with rats and similarly do not support breeding terns. Dates of visits to the islands harbouring nesting terns are not known exactly, but fell between 26 June and 23 July 1979; nests contained eggs, were sited on fairly bare, open ground, and numbers of terns were in tens rather than hundreds. Several species were involved, though not identified; the fact that they resembled Common Terns S. hirundo (FP in litt. 2 May 1987) suggests that 'white' Sterna terns were present and not Bridled Terns S. anaethetus or Noddy terns Anous.

iii) Breeding indications for other species

Red-billed Tropicbird Phaethon aethereus

About 25 displaying on Kitamah, 18 October 1979 (Phillips 1984); the rats on this island may compromise breeding success, though it appears that Sooty Falcon Falco concolor bred successfully here (see below).

Osprey Pandion haliaetus

Four birds and two nests on Hataban, 17 October 1979 (Phillips 1984).

Sooty Falcon Falco concolor

A pair with a juvenile on Kitamah, 18 October 1979 (Phillips 1984).

Human pressure

Terns' eggs and the aforementioned clutch of Spoonbill eggs were taken by the labourers who were helping the survey team. The crew of the fishing boat hired by the survey team dug up a turtle's nest (species unknown) on one of the islands and took the clutch of c.80 eggs. Sand was being collected at Al Murk for use as building material in Al Luhayyah. Plastic rubbish was common on all the islands' beaches, as it is on the mainland coast (pers. obs.).

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank Frank Preston and Ivan Adair for providing the detailed information which made the writing of this article possible.

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Appendix 1. Description of individual islands

The islands are listed from north to south (see fig. 1); names follow the recent YAR Yemen Survey Authority/British Directorate of Overseas Surveys 1:50,000 maps of the area, and are more reliable than the alternative names given, which are taken from a British Admiralty chart, date unknown, and the YAR Yemen Survey Authority/Swiss Technical Cooperation 1:500,000 1985 map. Island descriptions are taken from Preston (1979a & b; in litt. 2 May 1987) and describe physical features, including anchorage and landing points, as well as any other relevant non-ornithological observations. It is worth noting that the shape of the sand spits, and hence the shelter offered, can change very quickly in rough seas. On all the islands the fishing camps are occupied only seasonally.

Finally, it must be stressed that foreign birdwatchers proposing to visit these islands must obtain the necessary permission from the YAR government beforehand, for their own safety; permission is unlikely to be granted unless the visit is organised by some official body in formal cooperation with the relevant Yemeni authorities.

Buhays

Low sand island c.500 m long. Anchorage and campsite at eastern end.
Other name: Bahais.

Zakhah

Low sand island. Sand spit on eastern side, with a boat passage through the coral just SW of the sand spit, and leading to the western of two fishing camps on the SE side of the island.
Other names: Dhakha, Zaihah.

Zurbat

Sand island with a 3 m high ridge on the eastern side. There is a fishing camp and anchorage at the sand spit at the NE corner. Infested with rats.
Other name: Zirbat.

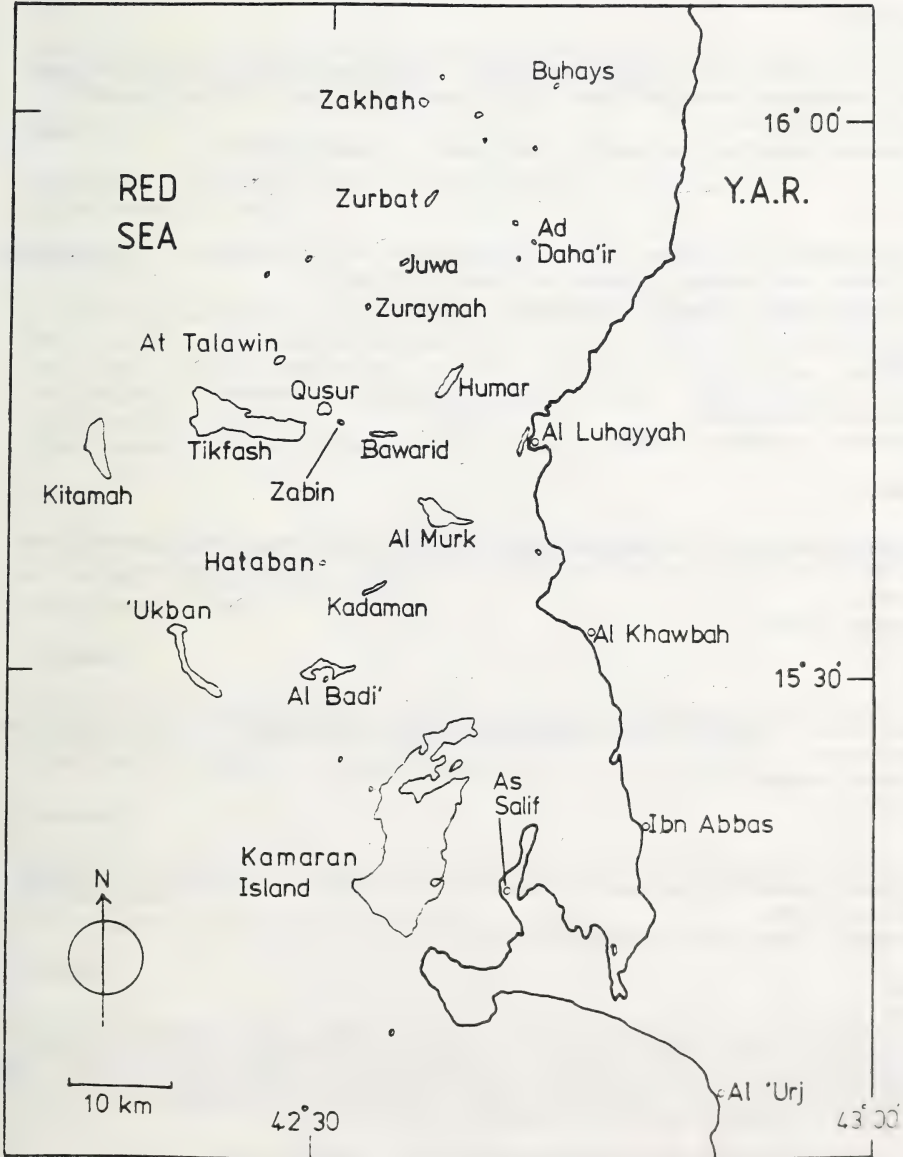


Figure 1. Red Sea islands off Al Luhayyah; see Appendix 1 for descriptions.

Ad Daha'ir

Sand islet, c.100 m long and 30 m wide. Two other islets, to the NW and SW, are sometimes included under this name as a group, but are usually covered at high tide.

Other names: Dahayir, Az Zaha'ir, Az Zaha'r, Funnel Island.

Juwa

Sand island with a fishing camp and anchorage in the centre of the eastern side. There are several graves on a small hillock.

Other names; Ajwa, Ajusak, Al Jusak.

Zuraymah

Possibly rat-infested.

Other names: Duraymah, Zayma.

At Talawin

Sand island with a 3 m ridge on eastern side. Anchorage and fishing camp at the NE corner, but no boat access at low tide. Some mangrove vegetation.

Other name: Tulwain.

Humar

A raised coral island with an anchorage and fishing camp by a sand spit at the NE corner.

Other name: Hamar.

Qusur

Sand island; possible to land on beach on NE side, but a shallow passage through the reef.

Other names: Khad Gussur, Kusi, Al Kus.

Tikfash

Rocky island of upraised coral (to 36 m a.s.l.); landings and anchorages are near centre of southern side, on a small beach near the SW corner, and near the NW corner. No nesting birds noted; plenty of mosquitoes.

Other names: Tagfash, Antufash, Autufish.

Zabin

Sand island. Large fishing camp and anchorage by sand spit at NE corner.
Other names: Zebin, Jusi Saghir, Al Kus as Saghir.

Bawarid

Upraised, flat-topped coral island without a landing beach.
Other name: Ba Baryd.

Kitamah

A rocky island with a ridge rising to 30 m a.s.l.; the only boat landing (with fishing camp and anchorage) is in the centre of the western side, and access can be limited at low tide. There is a well near the centre of the island, surrounded by Euphorbia vegetation. Unfortunately, the island is infested with rats.
Other names: Kutama, Kutman.

Al Murk

A flat, raised coral island, with a sand spit at SE corner where there is a fishing camp and anchorage.
Other name: Urmak.

Hataban

A small, sand island with a fishing camp and anchorage by the sand spit at the NE corner. There are several graves on the island.
Other names: Haddaban, Kadaman Saghir, Kadman as Saghir.

Kadaman

Sand island with an anchorage and landing at the NE corner, but no access at low tide.
Other names: Kadaman Kabir, Kadman al Kabir.

'Ukban

A hilly, raised coral island, with a ridge and cliff to 18 m a.s.l. Fishing camp and excellent anchorage on the SE side of the northern headland; also a good landing on the eastern side of the narrow central waist. No nesting birds noted. There are extensive remains of graves and settlement.
Other names: 'Ugban, Okban, 'Uqban Alkubra.

Al Badi'

A flat, sandy island.
Other names: Al Badhi, Al Bodhi, 'Uqban as Sughra.

Kamaran

The largest and only permanently inhabited island in the area, formerly part of the PDKY, now administered by the YAR. Much of the island is dead coral but enough vegetation exists to support a sizeable herd of camels; no Arabian Gazelles Gazella gazella were seen but a single horn was found.

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FIRST BREEDING RECORDS OF SPARROWHAWK IN ISRAEL

Ron Frumkin and Menahem Adar

Until recently, the Sparrowhawk Accipiter nisus was known only as a migrant and wintering species in Israel (Paz 1987). Although a few individuals were occasionally seen during the months of June and August, it had been assumed that they were either late or early migrants. The nearest breeding sites are in Turkey and, possibly, northwestern Syria (Cramp & Simmons 1980).

In late July 1988, M.A. heard begging calls of young Sparrowhawks which were flying around in a pine forest in the southeastern corner of Mount Carmel. The fledglings were still there a week later (4/8/1988), when their calls were recorded on tape.

In the following summer (2-8/7/1989), we returned to the same site and heard the calls of three or four fledglings. The Sparrowhawks were seen flying around, chasing each other and the hen that brought avian prey. We soon found the nest which was covered with down feathers and contained the remains of a freshly killed bird. At a distance of 50 m, we found an older Sparrowhawk's nest which was probably the one used in the previous year. Both nests were in Cyprus Pines Pinus brutia of 15 and 17 m height, and located at 12 and 14 m above the ground.



Several feathers of both adults were collected within 200 m of the nest, as well as a broken eggshell (which had been removed from the nest after hatching) and feathers of avian prey which had been plucked on the ground. We were able to identify and collect feathers of eight prey species: Feral Pigeon Columba livia (1), Collared Dove Streptopelia decaocto (4), Turtle Dove Streptopelia turtur (3, including 2 fledglings), Blackbird Turdus merula (2), Hoopoe Upupa epops (1), Yellow-vented Bulbul Pycnonotus xanthopygos (1), House Sparrow Passer domesticus (2) and Jay Garrulus glandarius (2).

Following the finding of the nests, a further survey of the area (8/7/1989) revealed another site with two or three newly fledged Sparrowhawks at a distance of 1 km from the first nest. In addition, adult Sparrowhawks were seen during that summer by several birdwatchers in six other pine woods in the north and the centre of Israel, but no nests were found.

It is still too early to say how common the Sparrowhawk's nesting is in Israel's woodlands as only a few birdwatchers look for birds in this habitat during the summer. Pine forests have been planted in the Mediterranean zone of Israel mainly during the last four decades, so it is

only recently that they have become mature and thus suitable for breeding Sparrowhawks. Their prey consists of local woodland and garden birds that come not only from the woods but also from the nearby agricultural settlements. A comprehensive survey and ecological study of the Sparrowhawk in Israel which is planned for the next few years will hopefully tell us more about this successful species.

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MORE ON CRANES IN EGYPT

Ted Flaxman

Following on from my note in OSME Bulletin 19 about Cranes Grus grus in Wadi Natrun, Egypt, I was able to visit the area again on 11 March 1989 and observed two large flocks. Once again, I visited the area with Ali Hamdy in his four-wheel-drive vehicle. We drove to the northern end of the series of salt lakes where at a small tented encampment we picked up a Bedouin who said that there had been Cranes in the area the day before. This Bedouin guided us westward for about 5 km to a large sandy wadi bed with scattered small scrub: here there were very recent footprints of Cranes, particularly concentrated around every scrap of vegetation. The area over which we saw the footprints was at least 1 km long. Either a considerable flock had been there or a smaller number of Cranes had been there long enough to have visited every possible piece of food in sight.

We then travelled westwards (approximately) for at least another 20 km and saw Crane footprints once again towards the end of this part of the trip. We then turned south, drove for perhaps 5 km and then turned east so that we covered a substantial triangle of desert. By 16.30 we were within about 5 km of the point where we had picked up the Bedouin and were beginning to fear that we were not to see any Cranes when we spotted a flock of about 250 gliding down to the northwest. We drove onto a small knoll and through our binoculars watched the birds settle on a gravelly area which looked quite barren.

On the way back to the Bedouin's encampment, we saw another group of Cranes silhouetted against the skyline, again in a barren looking area. This second group got up while we were still a long way off and contained at least 200 birds. I have never before seen flocks of any birds so large in such an arid area.

I am concerned about the degree of disturbance to which these birds are evidently subject. The birds are pursued by people in vehicles who try to shoot them and I learnt from Ali Hamdy that Abdul Kader has had many enquiries from English, Germans and others about the Cranes. Some of these may have been ornithologists, but others may not.

More significantly, I gather that some of the area east of the Cairo-Alexandria desert road formerly used regularly by the Cranes is now being developed for irrigation. In the area west of the desert road where we drove we came across curious lines ploughed across the desert which Ali thought were probably the boundaries of parcels of land recently sold. It appears that, with the recent successful extension of irrigation into areas that were previously barren, wealthy individuals and companies are buying up substantial tracts of desert, just in case they may some day be irrigable.

I cannot at the moment think of any practical and effective way of safeguarding these birds using what must, presumably, be a long-established staging area. The area in which we saw the birds to the west of the desert road was exceedingly unpromising as a feeding ground. Indeed, my reaction on seeing the arid scrub on which the birds had evidently fed was that they must have been very hungry. Clearly, this area is a significant staging post for Cranes migrating through Egypt and some kind of protection against disturbance and hunting is essential.

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XVII ICBP EUROPEAN CONTINENTAL SECTION CONFERENCE

Adana, Turkey 15-20 May 1989

Hilary Welch

OSME's decision to send a representative to this international conference was opportune and exciting. I felt privileged to have been asked to represent the Society, and made sure that in amongst the melee of other European organisations promoting themselves, OSME remained in the forefront. Thus the OSME displays were taken, along with copies of Sandgrouse and the Bulletin, and T shirts were available for sale; OSME stickers were stuck on most visitors. The stand generated a lot of interest - it was well patronised (or should I say plundered?) by Turkish students of the university, with various items disappearing when the stand was left unattended. It's consoling to think that the Turks are sufficiently interested in OSME, no other stand appeared to suffer from their attention!

I also gave a 30 minute illustrated talk about OSME to 30-40 delegates one evening. I was gratified to have been able to achieve this. Due to the fullness of the conference programme and the logistics of accommodation (delegates were staying in four different places, anything from 10-30 minutes bus ride apart), it was not possible to address the whole conference.

Overall, the conference itself was centred around the publication of the latest in the ICBP study report series, Important Bird Areas in Europe. More than anything, the book stands as a major milestone in international cooperation in conservation: without the ICBP network of national organisations the book would not have been possible. This feeling of strength through working together ran through the whole conference, re-vitalising waning enthusiasms and encouraging particularly the smaller organisations.

The first day of the conference was entitled 'The Importance of Turkey for Bird Conservation in Europe' and was attended by Isin Çelebi, the Turkish Minister of State, who also addressed the meeting.

Several points came out very clearly during the day's talks:

The international importance of Turkey for birds, including several endangered species.

The vital importance of Turkey's wetlands for migrants, wintering waterfowl and breeding populations, particularly of endangered species.

The huge pressure that Turkey's wildlife is under from increasing tourist and industrial development, pollution, irrigation schemes, and pesticides.

The gargantuan task which DHKD (with a mere four fulltime members of staff and five birdwatchers in the entire country) has taken on and the impressive list of successes already achieved.

The urgent need for bodies and birdwatchers outside Turkey to contribute to DHKD's conservation efforts by helping with data gathering.

Attendance at the conference would have been worthwhile solely for the contact made with DHKD (though most conversations and ideas were in fact exchanged during the relative quiet of the post-conference excursion). DHKD was very enthusiastic that OSME should run an expedition (or two) to Turkey and this is now being followed up by the Conservation Research Committee.

In an attempt to encourage more visiting birdwatchers to submit their records to OSME/DHKD, and also in an effort to control birdwatchers in sensitive areas, various initiatives were discussed. The addition of the conference booklet Turkey-a challenge for birdwatchers to the OSME sales list is one of those initiatives.

It was suggested that OSME might consider giving a small grant to DHKD which could be used to 50% fund keen but impecunious Turks (largely students) in membership of OSME. This proposal was warmly received and approved by Council; already we have three new Turkish members as a result.

I went on both the mid- and post-conference excursions which visited the Cukurova delta, Birecik, the Sultan Marshes and Demirkazik. The birdwatching was excellent and the sites included gave a flavour of the enormous range of species and habitats that Turkey has to offer. An event during the four day excursion gave food for thought.

At Birecik a large Blue-cheeked Bee-eater colony was found in an area where there had been none at all 10 days previously; Sancar Baris (DHKD's Bald Ibis officer) counted 45 birds and a total of 20 occupied nest holes. However, Sancar was somewhat concerned to see signs of recent sand extraction in the area. The colony would appear to be the largest in Turkey so, in the half-an-hour available before breakfast, Sancar and Nergis Yazgan visited the Governor of the area with the idea of stopping sand extraction for the duration of the breeding season.

The Governor, who has been sympathetic to DHKD initiatives in the past, took relatively little persuasion to agree to help. Sancar pointed out that as a result of the effective extinction of the Bald Ibis in Turkey, Birecik could experience a drop of perhaps 50% in its visiting tourists (important to the local economy) as birdwatchers ceased to visit the area. The Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, he argued, could be good for tourism, and it would be sad if Birecik were to lose not only the Bald Ibis but also the Blue-cheeked Bee-eater.

The Governor not only agreed that there should be no more sand extraction in the area, but also that Sancar should provide an information sheet for schools on the bee-eaters; Sancar was concerned that children would disturb the nesting birds by poking sticks down their nest holes as has happened with Rose-coloured Starlings in the past.

So, OSME members, don't under-estimate yourselves, birdwatchers are a powerful economic tool for conservation in Turkey.

Spin-offs from OSME's attendance at the conference continue to be felt, and not only in the greater volume of mail we now receive from DHKD! On a personal note, my increased knowledge and contacts should make me a more effective Secretary and more useful member of Council. For OSME, the conference fostered a greater interest in the Middle East (particularly Turkey) and a fuller understanding of what OSME is, and has to offer.

LIBRARY REPORT

Geoff and Hilary Welch

Recent items received in the OSME library include the following, which may not have come to the attention of all members.

Gallagher M. D. (1989). Oman Bird News 5

This report opens with a note about the 'welcome contributions from more observers...', a theme echoed in the introduction to the Dubai Bird Report (see below). This is a sentiment that OSME shares and we would urge all members visiting or resident in any of the countries within the region to submit records and/or articles to the relevant local/national ornithological societies or institutions. This edition contains, amongst others, papers on birds and other wildlife at sea around Oman in 1987-88; the first Oman record of Great Knot; the trapping of Marsh Warblers in Dhofar; ringing recoveries; prospective new Oman birds and a report from the Musandam region. Contributions for future copies of Oman Bird News and details of birds observed in Oman should be sent to M. D. Gallagher, c/o Oman Natural History Museum, PO Box 668, Muscat.

Jennings M. C. (1988). The Phoenix No. 5, December 1988

This is the latest in the series of newsletters/bulletins for contributors to the Atlas of Breeding Birds of Arabia project organised and run by Mike Jennings. Amongst the items packed into the 20 pages are news of the first confirmed breeding of Thick-billed Lark Rhamphocorys clotbey; an account of the continuing and largely unwelcome spread of the Indian House Crow Corvus splendens; details of sites of particular interest in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia; recent reports; book reviews and much more. Details of obtaining The Phoenix and of the ABBA project are available from Mike Jennings, Moonraker Cottage, 1 Eastcourt, Burbage, Nr Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3AG, Great Britain.

Richardson C. (Ed) (1988). Dubai Bird Report No. 6

Richardson C. (Ed) (1989). Emirates Bird Report No. 7 (formerly Dubai Bird Report)

These reports cover the periods October - December 1988 and January - March 1989. The former includes details of five species new to the United Arab Emirates - Namaqua Dove, Pechora Pipit, Eye-browed Thrush, Redwing and Long-tailed Shrike. The introduction to the 1988 list contains the encouraging statement 'A combination of enthusiastic observers and more awareness of the importance of our birdlife has resulted in an avalanche of records ...' - long may this continue. Colin Richardson can be contacted at PO Box 2825, Dubai, UAE.

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Compiled by Mrs F. E. Warr

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Welch, G., and Welch, H. 1989. autumn migration across the Bab-el-Mandeb Straits. Pages 123-125 in Meyburg, B.-U. and Chancellor, R. D. (eds) Raptors in the Modern World WWGBP: Berlin, London and Paris.

Journals containing notes on birds from which individual bird articles have not necessarily been listed:

Bahrain Natural History Society Newsletter. Short bird notes in some monthly issues. (BNHS, P.O. Box 20336, Manama, Bahrain.)

Birding World. Western Palearctic News, a regular item in monthly issues, contains some Middle Eastern records.

Cyprus Ornithological Society (1957) Newsletter. Issued monthly. (COS (1957), P.O. Box 4319, Nicosia, Cyprus.)

Gazelle - Dubai Natural History Group Newsletter. Bird notes in most monthly issues. (DNHG, P. O. Box 9292, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.)

Israel Land & Nature. Bird notes in all quarterly issues. (4 Hashfela Street, Tel Aviv 66186, Israel)

Newsletter Emirates Natural History Group (Abu Dhabi). Bird notes in most issues. (ENHG (Abu Dhabi), P.O. Box 303, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.)

Oman Bird News. Issued irregularly. (Oman Bird Records Committee, c/o M. D. Gallagher, Natural History Museum, P.O. Box 668, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman)

REVIEWS

The Birds of Egypt, edited by Steven M. Goodman and Peter L. Meininger, with Sherif M. Baha el Din, Joseph J. Hobbs and Wim C. Mullié, paintings by Sherif M. Baha el Din, graphics by Edward Khounganian and Peter L. Meininger. 1989. 576 pages. Oxford University Press. £75.

The appearance of this badly needed reference work dramatically increases the available information on the birds of Egypt. It brings together not only Meinertzhagen's work and published accounts of other authors, but also a vast array of unpublished records, comprehensive breeding-bird survey data and details of ringing recoveries, for each species recorded in Egypt. For this feat alone, the book is invaluable to anyone with an interest in Egyptian ornithology.

The first third of the book comprises sections on geography, nature conservation, bird protection and bird hunting, supported by excellent maps and black-and-white photographs which give an introduction to the geology and economy of each region and show the characteristic birds, mammals and plants. The depressing scale of the bird hunting is hard to take in: estimates of between 50,000 and 170,000 Quails Coturnix coturnix and between 270,000 and 540,000 small Palearctic migrants killed each year are only part of the story. The sections on nature conservation and bird protection do however give some encouragement that things are changing.

Colour plates by Sherif Baha depict a range of the birds characteristic of the different habitats, although his unusual style may not be to everyone's taste. The inclusion of Egyptian Arabic names for all species should be a help for those involved in field work in Egypt. For me, the main disappointment with the book is the high price which will undoubtedly deter many who would greatly appreciate this excellent and beautifully produced work.

Chris Bowden

Birds of Madinat Yanbu al-Sinaiyah and its hinterland, by Peter J. Baldwin and Brian S. Meadows. 1988. Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu: Riyadh. 136pp. English. 136pp. Arabic. Price and availability unknown.

This sturdy, well-produced book, printed on thick, glossy paper, is a summary of the authors' birdwatching experience between April 1979 and May 1987 within a radius of 75 km of the city of Yanbu al-Sinaiyah, which lies on the Red Sea coast of Saudi Arabia.

The main part of the text consists of a systematic list which details the status of the 286 species recorded in the aforementioned area. There are also introductory sections on the habitats in the area and their associated bird communities, tables of ornithological data for the three Conservation Areas designated within the city of Yanbu itself, tables summarising monthly occurrence of all recorded species, and also a very interesting discussion of migration in the area.

The book is illustrated in colour throughout with many bird photographs by the first author; a few are of less than perfect quality, but in general they enhance the text, and in some cases document occurrence of great rarities. The captioning (or lack of it) on one or two of the photographs is a little ambiguous, e.g. the Lesser Grey Shrike and Woodchat Shrike on p.130. There are also over 20 paintings by Ed Gonzalez which evocatively capture birds in their typical habitats: swifts feeding over a dam, a Barbary Falcon soaring over an industrial complex, Slender-billed Gull paddling in salt pans, and, my favourite, an aerial view of an autumn flock of European Bee-eaters migrating over the city.

Although comments on common or regularly occurring species are often pruned to the bare minimum in the systematic list, most species receiving less than ten lines of text, this part of the book is full of original observations and previously unpublished records. A rich haul of 'vagrants' indicate that life in this industrial city has not been without excitement; Grey Phalarope, Arctic and Black Terns, Eversmann's Redstart, Booted and Green Warblers and Red-breasted Flycatcher are some of them. Of particular note is the immature Bald Ibis seen on 14 March 1986; possibly en route from Yemen to Turkey? the systematic list also contains a lot of information on resident and migrant birds in the area that would be useful to beginner and expert birdwatchers alike. The discovery of a population of birds tentatively identified as African Reed Warblers in mangroves next to Yanbu shows that there is still much new to be learnt in Arabia.

A welcome feature is that the English text has been fully translated into Arabic and this forms the second half of the book, identical in layout and illustrations to the English version. As such, this book is a major contribution to the Arabic literature on ornithology and it will hopefully be widely available in schools and libraries in the region.

In summary, a worthwhile and interesting book which birdwatchers in western Arabia would be well advised to buy.

Mike Evans

Richard Meinertzhagen: Soldier, Scientist and Spy. By Mark Cocker. 1989. Secker and Warburg, London. 292 pages. 17 Black and White Photographs. £14.95.

The name Meinertzhagen is familiar to many birdwatchers, especially those with an interest in the Middle East. As author of Nicoll's Birds of Egypt (1930) and Birds of Arabia (1954) he produced books that almost until this day remained the authoritative works on those regions. The many larger-than-life stories that are associated with the man are, however, perhaps more the reason for his fame. In this detailed biography, Mark Cocker recounts and expands on many of these, putting them into context, perhaps for the first time.

Meinertzhagen's early life was primarily taken up with his career as a soldier, though this gave him time to pursue his interests in hunting in India and East Africa. During the first world war he became increasingly involved with intelligence work, finally serving as Allenby's chief of military intelligence during the Palestine Campaign. I found this part of the book particularly interesting perhaps because it was an aspect of Meinertzhagen's life that I knew little about. In 1919, he met T. E. Lawrence at the Paris Peace Conference and his comments on Lawrence are also fascinating.

The author has had to rely on Meinertzhagen's personal diaries for much of his information and it seems that considerable controversy surrounds these. They were written in a loose-leaf format and it has been suggested that Meinertzhagen may have re-written selected pages at later dates so as to make it seem as if he was more perceptive than he really was. Mark Cocker points out a number of chronological discrepancies which seem to back this up. Perhaps even more worrying is the suggestion that Meinertzhagen may have fabricated some of his ornithological data. One example of this concerns his account of Razo Lark Alauda razae. Meinertzhagen describes the feeding habits of the species, which is confined to one island in the Cape Verde islands, from personal observation. It seems, however, that he never visited the island concerned and cannot have seen the species in life! He is also accused of stealing specimens from museums and adding them to his own collection having relabelled them with fictitious data.

The life of this fascinating man was certainly a strange and complicated one. The author has presented us with a detailed account of it which I greatly enjoyed reading, even though many questions remain unanswered and subject to speculation; they probably always will. Anyone with an interest in Meinertzhagen or the history of ornithology in the early part of this century should certainly enjoy reading this book.

van der Have, T. M., van den Berk, V. M., Cronau, J. P., and Langeveld, M. J., (Eds.). 1988. South Turkey Project: A survey of waders and waterfowl in the Cukurova deltas, spring 1987. WIWO report No.22.

The title explains the primary subject of this document. The analysis of wetland bird passage, distribution and migration-turnover is very extensive. Much statistical and biometric data on waders - the result of a systematic ringing effort - and information on food and foraging is presented. There are many useful maps. Minor sections deal with climate and weather, observations of bats and sea-turtles, as well as lists of plants, mammals, amphibians and reptiles. The ecological importance of the area is very clearly established.

A systematic list dealing with all bird species recorded during the project is included. Noteworthy records include five individual Corncrakes Crex crex, a species which is very rarely recorded in Turkey, exceptional numbers of Broad-billed Sandpipers Limicola falcinellus and the westernmost records of Armenian Gull Larus armenicus in Turkey.

This report is the result of what is probably the most carefully planned, extensively analysed and best presented conservation-research programme dealing with any Turkish wetland. It was conceived and implemented in collaboration with DHKD, the premier Turkish conservation organisation. It is to be hoped that decision-makers dealing with environmental issues in Turkey take note of its conclusions and assist in the preservation of this important area.

Rod Martins

van Winden, A., Mostert, K., Ruiters, P., Siki, M. and de Waard, H. 1989. Waders and Waterfowl in spring 1988 at Eber Golu, Turkey. WIWO report No 28.

Another in the series of reports on specialist studies of wetlands birds published by the Dutch Working Group for International Wader and Waterfowl Research, this report presents data from Eber Gölü with special reference to passage of Ruff Philomachus pugnax.

Particularly useful features include a geographical description of Eber Gölü and additional general geographical comments on Aksehir, Karamik and Cavuscu Gölüs and a lake near Alparslan and Kadilar. Other brief sections deal with dates of arrival of spring migrants at Eber Gölü, observations of Greater Flamingo Phoenicopterus ruber and observations of mammals, amphibians and reptiles. The systematic list of observations of all species in Turkey is noteworthy for the inclusion of records of the following species which are scarce or rare in Turkey: Bean Goose Anser fabalis, Corncrake Crex crex, Black-winged Pratincole Glareola nordmanni and Sociable Plover Chettusia gregaria.

Rod Martins

Turkey - a challenge for birdwatchers. Dogal Hayati Koruma Dernegi (DHKD) 1989, 23 pages. Available from OSME Sales price £2.00.

This attractive booklet was prepared on the occasion of the XVII ICBP European Continental Section Conference in Adana in May 1989. The booklet, which is well illustrated with colour photographs and maps, provides an excellent taster of the delights and excitement of birdwatching in Turkey. Turkey's natural environment is under tremendous pressure from population growth and agricultural, tourist and industrial developments so it is not surprising that the theme of the booklet is the conservation of Turkey's natural resources.

The booklet begins by explaining what DHKD (the Society for the Protection of Wildlife) does and a brief history of nature conservation in Turkey together with some recent conservation activities. The booklet maps 25 of the most important bird areas of Turkey and subsequently describes two of them in detail (the Sultan Marshes and the Göksu Delta). The birds and other wildlife are described. This is followed by an important section on the threats to the areas and what is being done to counter them. Finally there is a useful section on where to go; I wish I had had this booklet when I visited the Sultan Marshes!

The sad story of the Bald Ibis Geronticus eremita, now apparently extinct as a wild breeding species in Turkey, emphasises the importance of Turkey for birds and the need for effective conservation.

While this booklet is aimed principally at birdwatchers, there is much in it of interest to all conservationists. In addition, it is a useful and reasonably priced educational resource for students studying geography, biology and general science for public examinations in Great Britain. It could find a market in education as well as amongst birdwatchers.

All the profit from the sale of this booklet by OSME goes straight to DHKD, so buying a copy will directly assist conservation in Turkey.

Simon Albrecht

A review of the genera *Calandrella*, *Spizocorys* and *Eremalauda* (Alaudidae) by W. R. J. Dean. 1989. Bull. B.O.C. 109: 95-100

Apart from four quite distinctive genera, larks look superficially much alike and have been split into a large number of genera based upon morphological characters of varying degrees of validity. This paper is the most recent contribution to our knowledge of the Afrotropical and Palearctic short-toed larks treated by Hall and Moreau in their 1970 magnum opus as genus *Calandrella* in the wide sense. Thirteen species are discussed by the author, in terms of plumage, display and nest-type characters and assigned to three species-groups: *Calandrella* in the restricted sense for the Eurasian - African short-toed larks (those present within the OSME geographical area); *Spizocorys* with five purely Afrotropical species; and, lastly, *Eremalauda* with *dunni* and the southwest African *starki*. This last grouping is the novelty proposed in this paper. Also reviewed are the different taxonomic treatments proposed for these larks by different authors - this is really helpful for the uninitiated. A very useful appendix sets out the author's diagnoses of each of the thirteen species. It is, however, a matter for individual judgement whether to regard these three groups as subgenera within *Calandrella* or as full, separate genera. To conclude, this is a valuable paper which is a very important contribution to lark systematics and a signal service to all field workers in the Middle East and Africa who are struggling with lark identification.

Derek Lees-Smith

The field identification of North American pipits by Ben King. 1981, American Birds 35: 778-788, 2 colour plates.

Further comments on the field identification of North American pipits by Kenneth C. Parkes 1982. American Birds 36: 20-22.

On the face of it, these two papers have nothing to do with the OSME area, but, of the seven *Anthus* species discussed, no less than four - Red-throated Pipit *A. cervinus*, Olive Tree-Pipit or Olive-backed Pipit *A. hodgsoni*, Olive-backed Pipit, Brown Tree-Pipit *A. trivialis* or Tree-Pipit and Meadow Pipit *A. pratensis* - have been recorded in our area, with one, Pechora Pipit *A. gustavi*, as a possible vagrant. Ben King discusses fully all these Eurasian pipits from his very extensive field experience. The remaining two in his paper - *A. spinoletta* (American populations now regarded as a separate species *A. rubescens* American Water Pipit or Buff-bellied Pipit) and Sprague's Pipit *A. spragueii* - are purely North American. Of the five Eurasian pipits, only the Red-throated breeds in Alaska, the others being only vagrants in North America. Two superb colour plates - side views of pipits by Peter Hayman and dorsal views by Pieter Prall plus a sketch figuring wing formulae and hind claw lengths of Meadow and Tree Pipits illustrate this paper together with a table tabulating the characters of the different species. Ken Parkes' paper is upon misidentification of autumn Meadow Pipits by him in the Isles of Scilly and upon the characters of the montane populations of American Water Pipits in western North America.

This is a splendid paper for field observers and ringers having trouble with this difficult group of Eurasian pipits. Ben King has put much effort and patience into his paper; unfortunately, the principal beneficiaries would only be North American observers in Alaska and in the Aleutian Islands, Europeans in Eurasia and northern Africa anywhere west of the Yenisei River and north of the Sahara and the Indian Ocean. These two papers should be studied and discussed together and should be standard references in the ringing rooms of every ringing station in Europe and in the satchels of every ringing party in the Middle East and North Africa.

Derek Lees-Smith

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Compiled by Simon Albrecht

The object of this section is to inform our readers about events in the OSME region. It is not intended as a definitive report or write up of the projects concerned and consequently only those organisations directly involved are mentioned in the text. Most of the projects are sponsored by various agencies whose support is appreciated but this is generally not the place for them to be acknowledged by name.

Turkey

Göksu Delta

The Göksu Delta on Turkey's southern coast is an internationally important wetland. It is the only breeding locality in Turkey of the Purple Gallinule Porphyrio porphyrio and has breeding populations of the rare Marbled Duck Marmaronetta angustirostris and Audouin's Gull Larus audouinii. Its beaches are amongst the most important nesting sites of the Loggerhead and Green Sea Turtles.

Following the campaign by Dogal Hayati Koruma Dernegi (the Society for the Protection of Wildlife), the construction of a holiday village at Paradeniz Gölü was supposed to have been stopped on 17 April (see OSME Bull. 22:45-46). However when DHKD visited the site on 29 July, it was evident that construction was still continuing. DHKD have re-started their campaign to stop the building.

On 21 April 1989, the area was given protection status by the Turkish Forestry Department in the Ministry of Forestry, Rural Affairs and Agriculture following discussions with DHKD and ICBP. In July another department in the Ministry of Forestry gave permission for the construction of a shrimp farm on the beach south of Paradeniz Gölü in the middle of Little Tern Sterna albifrons colonies and the turtle nesting area. The department concerned was either unaware of or disregarded the protection status granted in April. Following urgent representation from DHKD, a number of organisations including OSME telexed our protests to the appropriate ministers in Ankara. So far no definite decisions have been made but the international concern for Turkey's wildlife is appreciated.

Ferro-chrome factory at Yumurtalik

On 6 July 1989, Turkish television announced that a huge deposit of chrome ore had been found in the Taurus Mountains near Adana. The amount is three times greater than the combined total of all other known deposits in Turkey. It was also said that a huge ferro-chrome plant would be built at Yumurtalik. The town is on the edge of the Ceyhan Delta which is of international importance being listed in Important Bird Areas in Europe.

While the exact location of the factory is unknown, DKHD has expressed concern because the Yumurtalik lagoons are important for migrating waders and the beaches are important for nesting turtles.

It is hoped that a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be made so that the development can take place without damage to the natural environment. Turkey is keen to join the European Community. If it were a member, an EIA would be a requirement before development took place.

Conservation and religion

According to the April - June 1989 issue of 'The New Road', the World Wide Fund for Nature's bulletin on conservation and religion, the problems of environmental pollution in Turkey are being tackled through the Mosques. A team led by Professor Kriton Curi, head of the Pollution Control Research Group at the Bosphorus University have run trials in which they convinced local imams that waste management for the sake of the environment was fully in accord with Islamic teachings. This concept was shared with the faithful at Friday prayers and was followed by a dramatic improvement in waste management in the area. The trials are now being extended to other areas.

UAE and trade in endangered species

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) has become increasingly well known in recent years as more countries have joined. At present, there are 103 countries that are party to the Convention. It has recently come to our attention that the United Arab Emirates is the only country to have withdrawn from CITES. The UAE became a party to CITES in July 1975, but made little or no effort to implement the Convention. So great was the trade in illegal species through the UAE that the CITES Secretariat urged a ban on all trade with the UAE in November 1985 until such time that the UAE took adequate steps to implement CITES. Instead of implementing CITES the UAE announced its intention to withdraw from CITES in January 1987 and this became effective on 27 January 1988.

Egypt

During the summer of 1989, Sayed Gamei, the conservation education officer for the Egyptian Wildlife Service, attended a two-month advanced training course at ICCE, the International Centre for Conservation Education, near Cheltenham, to prepare further educational material, namely books on ecological and conservation themes and two more audio-visual slide shows. His training also included the use of modern twin-projector equipment which he has taken back to Egypt for the Conservation Education Centre which is to be opened at Giza Zoo on 15 November.

The opening of this Conservation Education Centre will be the first major achievement of the Conservation Education project jointly run by ICBP and EWS and funded mainly through the Dutch Society for the Protection of Birds (Vogelbescherming).

Mindy Rosenzweig and Sherif Baha El Din

Our congratulations go to Mindy and Sherif who were married in Cairo on 21 June 1989.

Important Bird Areas of Europe

This long awaited book was published in spring 1989. It gives sites important for migrating birds as well as for birds threatened globally or within much of Europe and birds with small world ranges. While the concept of important bird areas has limitations which the authors point out, the publication is a valuable guide to the conservation action that is required throughout Europe. It also gives a fascinating insight to the birds of each country and is a stimulus to further exploration and research. The whole of Turkey is included in the book and the account follows a standard format. An introduction describes the country's main regions, its ornithological importance and conservation infrastructure and protected-area system and finally an overview of the inventory. There are 79 sites of which 62 are wetlands, three are bottleneck sites for soaring migratory birds, eight are mountain or forest areas, five are rocky islands (four coastal), and one is an area of steppe and dry agricultural land. There are clearly many important bird areas that have not been included in the book so there is much opportunity for discovering new sites as well as adding to the knowledge of the 79 sites. A full review will appear elsewhere.

Important Bird Areas of Europe by R. F. A. Grimmett and T. A. Jones (ICBP Technical Publication No.9) is available from International Council for Bird Preservation, 32 Cambridge Road, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0PJ, Great Britain. Price £21.50.

Important Bird Areas in Turkey

Türkiye'nin Önemli Kuş Alanları is a Turkish language book covering the important bird areas of Turkey. It is written by Asaf Ertan, Aygün Kilic and Max Kasperek and published by Dogal Hayati Koruma Dernegi (DHKD) and ICBP. It was launched at the ICBP European Section Conference in Adana in May. It is an important publication because it makes the information available in Grimmett & Jones available in Turkey. The book is available from Dogal Hayati Koruma Dernegi, P.K. 18, Bebek, 81810 Istanbul, Turkey.

Countries of the Middle East in CITES

The following countries in the Middle East are party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) as of 22 August 1989:

Afghanistan	Israel
Cyprus	Jordan
Egypt	Somalia
Iran	Sudan

Slender-billed Curlew - Conservation Programme

Sightings of this critically threatened species remain very sparse. Spring 1989 sightings include records from Puglia, Italy, in March and the Danube Delta in April. Unexpectedly, two individuals have been reported from the Cosmoledo Islands near Aldabra in the Indian Ocean. This may involve birds overshooting from wintering grounds in the Middle East. Further details of the autumn 1988 records from North Yemen are available. Two Slender-billed Curlews were seen on 6 October (not November as reported in Bulletin 22) with four Whimbrel on the beach at Al Mukha. Another two birds (possibly the same) were seen the following day with seven Whimbrel on the beach at Al Khawkhah which is 50 Km farther north.

Previous breeding grounds in Siberia were surveyed without success in June. The species had been recorded in 1914 but the area has been fragmented by the creation of farmland.

If anyone has relevant information past or present please send it to: Adam Gretton, ICBP, 32 Cambridge Road, Girton, Cambridge, CB3 0PJ, Great Britain. Tel. 0223-277318.

Indian Silverbill breeding in Israel

News comes from Hadoram Shirihi of the possible addition of a new species to the west Palearctic list an established breeder, albeit presumably a feral one. The first Indian Silverbills Euodice malabarica, including some young birds, were recorded near Eilat in summer and autumn 1988, and the same autumn at least 100 were found in other areas as well: the Dead Sea, Jordan valley and Lake Tiberias. This spring, five pairs bred successfully at Eilat and courtship behaviour was seen elsewhere.



It remains to be seen, of course, whether this population persists, but the sudden appearance of so many birds suggests that they may have been around for some time already. In particular, there has been talk of the species breeding in Wadi Ammud near Lake Tiberias several years ago. Anyone with records from the period before 1988, especially if suggestive of breeding, is welcome to contribute them for use in Birds of the Western Palearctic and in Hadoram's forthcoming Birds of Israel. Observers should also look out for and report this species in future years. Please write to: Duncan Brooks, British Museum (Nat. Hist.), Akeman St, Tring, Herts HP23 6AP, Great Britain.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ICBP/FFPS Conservation Expedition Competition

Any university students planning an expedition abroad relating to wildlife conservation and involving local people as well as British expedition members are reminded that they could be eligible to enter the conservation expedition competition organised by the International Council for Bird Preservation and the Flora and Fauna Preservation Society. There will be four prizes in two categories: a) birds (£1,000 and £800); and b) all other wild animals and plants (£1,000 and £800). entries must be submitted by 31 January 1990. Full details of the competition can be obtained from ICBP, 32 Cambridge Road, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0PL, Great Britain.

Israel Ornithological Centre

This organization combines both the 'Israel Bird Information Centre' and 'Israel Raptor Information Centre' into one organization under the 'Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel' (SPNI). The IOC is also running the Ringing Centre together with the Nature Reserves Authority. The IRIC is still in Har-Gilo, while the IOC is centred in Tel-Aviv. The Ringing Centre is still in Jerusalem.

The IOC is now expanding its Ornithological library (in Tel-Aviv) and would welcome any summaries or reports from birdwatching trips to Israel, as well as any kind of ornithological publications (books, articles, journals etc). The IOC is also interested in setting up exchanges with other ornithological journals (either for Torgos or Israel Land and Nature). For any further information and a list of publications please write to Dr Ron Frumkin at Israel Ornithological Centre, SPNI, 4 Hashfela St., Tel-Aviv 66183, Israel.

SPRING MIGRATION AT EILAT

The International Birdwatching Centre at Eilat will be running a Spring Migration Festival from 20-30 March 1990. Events will include; daily lectures by leading ornithologists from Israel and abroad, four bird photography exhibitions, a festival of bird films, birdwatching tours around Eilat, Sinai, the Negev Desert and Northern Israel. Full details are available from David Yekutieli, IBCE, P.O. Box 774, 88106 Eilat, Israel.

GOING TO TURKEY?

Anyone planning a birdwatching holiday in Turkey might like to know that the Turkish authorities are considering introducing a visa scheme for British citizens. The final decision has yet to be made but those planning to visit Turkey should contact the Turkish Consulate, Rutland Lodge, Rutland Gardens, Knightsbridge, London, SW7 1BW (Tel: 01-589-0360) for the latest advice.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Birdwatching in Jordan

Ian Andrews has recently moved to Amman in Jordan where he will be living for the next two years. He is having difficulty finding information about birdwatching in the country and would like to hear from any birdwatchers who have lived there or have visited Jordan on holiday. All information on birds and birdwatching sites would be gratefully received. He can be contacted through the British Embassy, P.O. Box 87, Amman, Jordan. If anybody is intending to visit Jordan he would be more than willing to provide them with what information he has himself.

OSME NEWS**Turkey, May 1990**

At the time of going to press, plans are being finalised - subject to permission - for OSME's second expedition.

Working closely with the Society for the Protection of Nature in Turkey (DHKD), phase one of the project plans to survey, during May, the breeding bird populations of the Cocacay Delta, on the southern edge of the Sea of Marmara. This area is included in the ICBP's new publication, 'Important Bird Areas in Europe'. Particular attention will be paid to the most threatened species and to evaluating threats and formulating conservation recommendations for the area. Work will be carried out by competent ornithologists, selected from the OSME membership, who will train and work alongside Turkish participants selected by DHKD.

Any OSME member is eligible for a place on the expedition, and those interested should contact Chris Bowden, Chairman of the Conservation Research Committee. Ideally, participants should be able to manage the full month, but those who can spend only two weeks should not be put off from applying. Please remember that plans are still provisional, as permission has yet to be granted by the Turkish authorities.

Twelfth Annual General Meeting

The Twelfth AGM will be held on the afternoon of Saturday 7 July 1990 in the Lecture Theatre, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London. Details will be announced in the spring Bulletin.

Notes from the Sales Officer**Bulletins**

Issues 13, 14, 15 and 19, which were out of stock, have now been re-printed and will be available shortly at 60 pence each which includes post and packing. You can't get better value than that!

Turkey - a challenge for birdwatchers

This is reviewed in this issue and is now available from the Sales Officer at £2; after subtracting the cost of post and packing, the remainder of the £2 will go to DHKD so this is an ideal way of contributing to their work.

Falconry and Hunting in Turkey during 1987

This report by Gernant Magnin, ICBP Study Report No.34, is now available from the Sales Officer at £5.00.

Sandgrouse 1

This is out of print. If anyone has a copy they no longer require, please return it to us for re-sale to someone on the waiting list.

Officers of the Society 1989/90**Vice Presidents**

Sir Derek Barber, UK
 Prof Dr W Büttiker, Switzerland
 Major M D Gallagher, Oman
 Prof H Mendelssohn, Israel
 Dr G Thomé, Lebanon
 Sir William Wilkinson, UK
 Mrs N Yazgan, Turkey

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J S M Albrecht
 S M Andrews - Publicity Officer
 C G R Bowden - Chairman, Conservation Research Committee
 Dr M Boyd - Assistant Bulletin Editor
 D J Brooks - Sandgrouse Editor
 Major D J R Counsell - Treasurer
 M I Evans
 D J Fisher - Bulletin Editor
 M C Jennings
 R P Martins - Turkish Bird Report Coordinator
 W E Oddie
 R F Porter
 Dr M R W Rands - Chairman
 G R Welch - Library/Secretary
 Mrs H J Welch - Secretary/Library

A small tribute to outgoing Vice-Presidents

As OSME enters its eleventh year we sadly lose the services of two irreplaceable Vice-Presidents.

Philip Hollom

I can think of no one, my family excepted, with whom I would rather be stranded on a desert island than Phil Hollom. His kindness, wisdom, wealth of knowledge and anecdotes combined with his calm and generous manner would make such an experience most pleasant and informative. His contribution to ornithology in Britain, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa is quite outstanding and yet he remains unassuming, enthusiastic and extremely helpful to those of us beginning our ornithological careers.

Phil Hollom has played a pioneering role in both the Ornithological Society of Turkey (OST) and OSME. From its inception in 1967 he served as the chairman of OST's Records and Editorial Committee and later became chairman of the Society's foreign section. As a Vice-President of OSME for the last ten years he has attended more council meetings and AGM's than any other member of the Society devoting at least 120 hours of committee time to its cause. Furthermore, he has provided a crisp clarity of thought, plenty of good humour and a wealth of knowledge and experience on the region to Council meetings, all of which have added significantly to OSME's successful progress. Not being content merely to serve the Society through an active committee role, Phil joined the 1985 OSME Yemen Expedition. This must have almost completed his first-hand experience of every Middle Eastern country and provided the expedition with one of its hardest working (be it collecting data or washing up), enterprising and enthusiastic members.

While OST and OSME have benefitted greatly from Phil Hollom's many contributions to their administration, the birds for which these societies were formed have gained even more. I need not remind OSME members of Phil's role in furthering our knowledge and understanding of Middle Eastern birds. His senior authorship of Birds of the Middle East and North Africa, published last year - a project he conceived in the 1940s and has worked studiously towards ever since - is but one in a long, and as yet unfinished I am sure, series of accomplishments that stand as a testimony to his talents as an ornithologist and communicator.

Phil Hollom will obviously be deeply missed by OSME council and we are eternally grateful for his advice, friendship and enthusiastic support. However, those fortunate enough to have the pleasure of Phil's company, be it at an OSME meeting, on our next expedition or elsewhere, can be sure to benefit from this truly delightful and remarkable man.

Dr Hans Kumerloeve

Since his first expedition to central Anatolia and the mountain forests of Ilgaz Daglari in 1933, Hans Kumerloeve has been painstakingly researching the wildlife of Turkey. Between 1953 and 1969 he visited, sometimes with his wife Gertraude, almost all of Turkey to study and collect its birds and mammals; many of the fruits of his labour are to be found in the Zoological Research Institute and Museum A. Koenig in Bonn. The combination of his own field investigations and meticulous documentation of collections made by zoologists in the region and their published and unpublished works, have led to Dr Kumerloeve's unparalleled knowledge of the distribution and ecology of Turkey's birds, a knowledge passed onto the scientific world through his accumulated publication list of over 90 papers (in German, French and English).

Hans Kumerloeve has contributed to OSME as a Vice-President through a lively and vigorous correspondence with its Council on a number of key ornithological issues in the region and by his regular (and we hope continuing) submission of contributions to Sandgrouse and the Bulletin. Perhaps greater still has been his contribution to OSME's (and OST's) cause - the study and conservation of the region's avifauna - through his active promotion of bird protection, nature conservation and reforms of the hunting legislation in Turkey. As recently as May this year he was vigorously campaigning at the ICBP European Continental Section meeting in Adana for the conservation of Turkish wetlands. We hope he will continue to service the Society cause for along time to come and thank him most warmly for his term of office.

Michael Rands

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ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

c/o THE LODGE, SANDY, BEDFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND.

The Ornithological Society of the Middle East was formed in April 1978 and is a successor to the Ornithological Society of Turkey.

Aims

1. To collect, collate and publish ornithological data on the birds of the Middle East.
2. To encourage an interest in and conservation of the birds of the Middle East.
3. To develop a mutually beneficial working relationship with all environmental and conservation bodies and natural history societies in and concerned with the Middle East.

Membership is open to all and spans over 40 countries.

Publications Sandgrouse is the annual journal of the Society and contains scientific papers on all aspects of the ornithology of the Middle East. A bulletin is also issued bi-annually to all members.



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